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LETTER DATED 30 NOVEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZIMBABWE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to the final report of the International Commission of Inquiry (Rwanda) (S/1998/1096) and, specifically to paragraphs 70 and 71, 87 and 97 and 98 of the report.

Paragraphs 70 and 71 relate to the unsuccessful efforts of the Commission to visit Harare, and the subsequent visit by one of the members of the Commission. The purpose of the visit, according to the Commission, was to "... supplement its knowledge of arms trafficking throughout southern Africa in general and its understanding of Zimbabwe's involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the context of the ex-FAR in particular ...". The Government of Zimbabwe is surprised that the Commission makes the absence of an invitation an issue, and does not see the linkage between the mandate of the Commission and Zimbabwe's presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During the Commission's visits to other countries in southern Africa, according to its report, it found no evidence showing that any of the countries in southern Africa were trafficking in arms to the ex-FAR and Interahamwe and, for that matter, to any other organization. We therefore find no reason why the absence of an invitation is an issue in this report.

In paragraph 87, the Commission concludes that "despite the imposition upon them of a Security Council arms embargo ... the ex-FAR and Interahamwe have now become in effect the allies of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its allies, the Governments of Angola, Chad, Namibia and Zimbabwe ... This is a profoundly shocking state of affairs".

This highly tendentious statement clearly reveals the unprofessional, biased and partisan character of the Commission. Having failed to link my Government to the core of the Commission's mandate, namely, the illegal flow of arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Commission, through despicable sophistry, tries to create a political linkage between my Government and those who perpetrated genocide in Rwanda, whom my Government has never ceased to condemn at every possible forum. Zimbabwe has articulated on several occasions the noble principles of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and the Charter of the United Nations, which prompted it to respond positively to the

request by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for assistance to repel invasion by Rwanda, whose Government has since admitted its transgression of international law. The perpetrators of genocide are fighting the military dictatorship in Rwanda for their own objectives, to which my Government is not privy. It is highly irresponsible and despicable for the Commission to suggest that the SADC allies, who are assisting the Democratic Republic of the Congo to resist invasion by Rwanda and Uganda, and whose noble role received the imprimatur of SADC heads of State and Government when they met recently in Mauritius, are allies of the Interahamwe and the ex-FAR, when such an alliance has not been proven. The SADC alliance is not in the Democratic Republic of the Congo because of the domestic politics in Rwanda, nor is it aware of the political and military objectives of the Interahamwe and ex-FAR.

If the Commission has opted to go beyond the technical nature of its mandate of investigating the illegal flow of arms in the Great Lakes Region and to delve into the political domain by questioning the lawful presence of the SADC allies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while not questioning the illegal presence in that country of the Rwandese army, it does not require one to have a Ph.D. degree to discern where the political sympathies of the Commission are.

In paragraph 97, the Commission recommends that "... the Council may also wish to call upon the Governments engaged in the conflict to renounce and dissociate themselves from the former Rwandan government forces and militia and from any appeal to racial hatred". Once again the Commission misdirects its attention to matters of no particular or specific reference to its mandate. The Commission has not shown in its report any evidence that the allied forces, by defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were inciting racial hatred among the Congolese people, nor has it shown anything to suggest that the allied forces are in cahoots with the Rwandese genocidaires. Zimbabwe and its allies are not involved in Rwanda's internal politics, and will continue to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo to repel invasion from wherever it may emanate.

In conclusion, my Government believes that the purpose of the Commission is to assemble facts and evidence to enable the Council to make informed decisions. We regret that the partisan and openly biased conclusions and recommendations made by the Commission in reference to Zimbabwe and it allies' participation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo lack those facts and are clearly intended to be an apologia for Rwanda's clearly stated admission of its invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its continued presence in that country against international law.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Machivenyika T[illegible]ias MAPURANGA
Ambassador and Permanent Representative